

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION IN PRE AND POST TRIP: A STUDY ON INDONESIAN TOURIST VISITED THAILAND

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Abstract

Satisfied and dissatisfied consumers will create positive or negative Word-of-Mouth communication about their experience on product. This research focuses on Indonesian tourists visiting Thailand, with the objectives, first, to explore the pre-trip information about Thailand as a tourist destination and about its attractions. The second is to explore the post-trip information that the Indonesian tourists would say through Word-of-Mouth communication about Thailand as a tourist destination and its attractions. Interview and observation are used to get the data, and the qualitative analysis with phenomenological approach is used to get the interpretive themes of the received and potential spread-out information. The findings indicated the Indonesia tourists have received minimum information about Thailand and about its attractions. During their trip, beside encountered many disappointment or dissatisfaction reality, they also have got good experiences and views which are followed by admirations. Those experiences will be told to their friends and relatives. It also shown that although they were not satisfied, they still have willingness to revisit and recommend selectively to their friends an relative.

Keywords: tourist, word-of-mouth, phenomenological

Abstrak

Kepuasan dan ketidakpuasan konsumen akan menimbulkan positif dan negatif *word-of-mouth* terutama terkait dengan pengalaman mereka terhadap produk tersebut. Penelitian ini berfokus pada turis Indonesia yang mengunjungi Thailand. Tujuan penelitian antara lain mengeksplorasi informasi sebelum perjalanan dan mengeksplorasi informasi setelah perjalanan. Metode pengumpulan data melalui observasi dan interview menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif *phenomenological*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan turis Indonesia mendapatkan informasi yang terbatas mengenai tujuan wisata di Thailand. Namun dalam perjalanan mereka cukup kagum dan terpesona dengan tujuan wisata di Thailand. Berdasarkan fakta ini maka *word-of-mouth* yang akan mereka sampaikan kepada teman dan sahabat cenderung positif, walaupun terdapat beberapa hal yang mengecewakan selama perjalanan. Para turis Indonesia juga tidak keberatan untuk berkunjung kembali dan merekomendasikan Thailand sebagai tujuan wisata.

Kata kunci: *tourist, word-of-mouth, phenomenological*

1. Research Background

Marketing researchers have found that personal sources play a particularly influential role in affecting the choice of products, selecting service providers, and in diffusing information regarding new products. Personal sources often are rated by consumers as the most important source of information, especially when the information seekers perceive high risk, or when consumers are generally susceptible to interpersonal influence.

One of the most widely accepted notions in consumer behavior is Word-of-Mouth communication. Word-of-Mouth communication has an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Word-of-Mouth communication forms consumers' expectation. During the 1960s and early 1970s, many other studies demonstrated the continued importance of interpersonal influence. Word-of-Mouth communication is a kind of interpersonal communications in which none of the participants are marketing sources. Compared to information in the mass media, Arndt (1968) suggests that information transmitted through Word-Mouth communication is more selective and personal.

Word-of-Mouth communication has a much greater impact. It is precisely for that reason; Word-of-Mouth communication offers more reliable and trustworthy advice. This is due to the fact that in Word-of-Mouth communication there is an opportunity for feedback and clarification. It is regarded as providing a more reliable, trustworthy advice. Personal contacts in Word-of-Mouth communication are generally able to offer social support and encourage to other people to do something.

Republic of Indonesia is the biggest country in South East Asia. According to the Indonesian Tourism General Information, it is a vast archipelago with approximately 17,508 islands, in which only about 6,000 of those islands are inhabited. With regard to tourism industry, the country has a huge area which provides various alternatives as potential tourists' attractions.

According to Thailand's tourism statistic 2002, Republic of Indonesia provide one of the high markets in the Thailand tourism industry. The statistic indicated that the number of Indonesian tourists decreased from 156,764 in 2000 to 85,960 in 2002. The decrease of the number might be for certain reason. One reason would be base on the information received by the potential tourist which has influenced their decision about traveling. It would be also base in their experiences when they are visiting Thailand.

In consider the important role of Word-of-Mouth communication in encouraging people to do (or not to do) something, it is necessary to discover the information which has influenced the potential tourists' decision of visiting Thailand, the tourists' experiences in Thailand, and the their statement after visiting Thailand.

To explore that information, this research used qualitative approach and used the phenomenological approach, as one of traditional approach in qualitative research. This approach is able to find the common themes of the existing information among the tourists of the potential tourists. The objectives of this research are:

- a) To explore the pre-trip information that the Indonesian tourists have received through the Word-of-Mouth communication about Thailand as a tourists' destination and about the attractions in Thailand
- b) To explore the post-trip information that the Indonesian tourists would say through the Word-of-Mouth communication about Thailand as a tourists' destination and about the attractions in Thailand

The following are the statements of the problem of this research: a) What kind of pre-trip information did the tourists receive through the Word-of-Mouth communication about Thailand as tourists' destination and about the attractions in Thailand? b) What kind of post-trip information would tourists say through the Word-of-Mouth communication about Thailand as tourists' destination and about the attractions in Thailand?

Hopefully, the findings of this research will be useful for Thailand's government; especially institution which promotes the attractions in Thailand (TAT), by providing information about the attractions from the tourist point of view. This research also will inform the government or the tourism ministry in Indonesia the description about Thailand and its various tourist product from the tourists' point of view. Furthermore, the finding is useful for Indonesian tourist agency and government agency.

2. Literature Review

Tourism products are largely services. Kotler and Armstrong (2002) have attempted to define service in relation to their intangibility and the fact that purchasing a service is never resulted in the ownership of anything. As an intangible business, it cannot be seen or tested or smelled before purchasing. That is why the consumers can often have a high level of insecurity during purchasing a product (see Berry and Parasuraman, 1991, Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999: 72).

This is simply because the consumers cannot try out the product or service before purchasing it. Therefore they will look around to make assurance about their choice. They might take advice from other consumers who have an experience with product or service. Swarbrooke and Horner (1999: 72) further suggests that an individual is likely to be strongly influenced by other people during their decision making process.

One of the most widely accepted notions in consumer behavior is that Word-of-Mouth communication plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Word-of-Mouth communication is a kind of interpersonal communications in which none of the participants are marketing sources. Berry and Parasuraman (1991) argue that Word-of-Mouth communication is important in services industries, since the existence of the intangible characteristic in this industry.

This research aims to explore the description of the pre-trip information that influences the current tourists' decision. The second objective is to explore the on-trip statements of the tourists. The third objective is to explore the description of the post-trip information that will be spread out by the tourists to

the potential tourists, that is information transmitted through the Word-of-Mouth communication.

According to Solomon (2002: 332) Word-of-Mouth communication is "information about a product or service, transmitted by people to other people". Solomon further argues that Word-of-Mouth communication tends to be more reliable and trustworthy than recommendations from formal marketing channels. Naturally, people will obtain information from someone they know. Since the process by which messages are communicated verbally from one person to another, the Word-of-Mouth communication represents a very powerful medium. Gronroos (2000) specifies that the message in Word-of-Mouth communication is about the organization, its credibility and trustworthiness, its operation, its services and so on.

Gronroos (2000) claims that the marketing impacts of the Word-of-Mouth communication is usually huge. It is frequently greater than that of planned communication. In the eyes of a potential customer, a person who has an experience with the service provider considered to provide information which is objective, more credible and less biased information (Bateson, 1995).

Because of its unbiased information from someone who has been through the service experience, Word-of-Mouth communication becomes more important as objective standard for evaluation. For more, Word-of-Mouth communication plays an importance role in forming consumers' expectations (Bateson, 1995: 289; see also Lovelock, 2002; Gronroos, 2000; Zeithaml, et al., 1996 cited in; Kandampully, 2001).

It terms of consumer expectations, Word-of-Mouth communication is one of the strongest influencers in forming the customers' expectation during the pre-purchase phase by seeking the opinion, evaluation or recommendation from others. Related to the multiple effect of the Word-of Mouth communication, only 1 out of 26 dissatisfaction consumers complain to the firm. In other word, for every consumer that did complain, there are approximately 25 consumers who were dissatisfied but did not complain.

Gronroos (2000) suggests that only very satisfied consumers will engage in any substantial positive Word-of-Mouth communication endorsements and thus, they become "unpaid" marketing and sales persons for the firm. On the other hand, very unsatisfied consumers can be expected to create a substantial negative Word-of-Mouth communication and thus, become "terrorists". They will reinforce negative but not totally unsatisfactory experiences of other consumers. By doing so, they will scare away the new potential consumers.

To summarize, the process of Word-of Mouth can be described as an advance-able circle as shown in Figure 1. The Word-of-Mouth communication spread in the community about a particular tourism product or service will influence the consumers' decision to buy or to travel. Their experience will be followed by the Word-of-Mouth communication in the post travel period, and it will influence the next decision of the traveler to repeat their travel destination. The spread of Word-of-Mouth communication between travelers or potential travelers is considered as the most influencer for other travelers' decision, if they will travel to a certain destination.

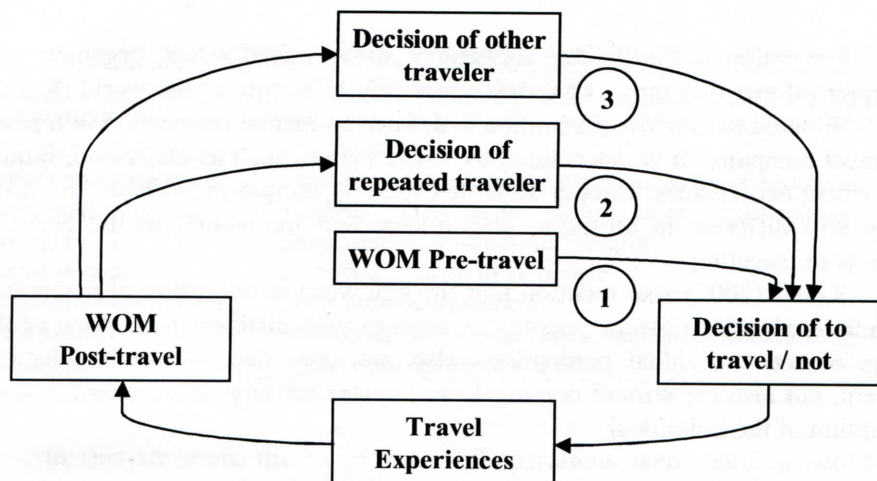


Figure 1. Word-of-Mouth Communication as an Advance-Able Circle

The stage is consists of pre-trip stage; on-trip stage and post-trip stage whereas in each stage, tourism or tourists will use a variety of mediums in searching and spreading the information (see: Table 1). At the pre-trip stage of this model, the communication of tourism promotes through the motif of escape from the home environment. Generally, this communication is dominated by outsiders, such as friends, tour operators, etc.

Table 1. Classification of the Media of Tourism by the Stages of Trip

Medium	Stage of Trip		
	Pre	On	Post
Written	Literary	Literary	Literary
	Informational	Informational	Informational
	Experiential	Experiential	Experiential
Audio	Informational	Informational	Informational
	Electronic	Electronic	Electronic
	Two-dimensional	Two-dimensional	Two-dimensional
Visual/sensory	Multidimensional	Multidimensional	Multidimensional
	Informational	Informational	Informational
Written and Visual/sensory	External	External	External
	Computer-assisted	--	--
	Electronic	Electronic	Electronic
Audio and Visual/sensory	Live	Live	--
	Expositional	Expositional	Expositional
Written and Audio and Visual/sensory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory

At the on-trip stages, the accent is on renewal though prior message reinforcement and new emphasis on the attraction in the destination. At the post-trip stage, the communication stresses on reintegration into the origin community, with a view to recommend the whole touristic process afresh at a subsequent pre-trip stage (the circular quality of tourism). The communication in pre-trip and on-trip stages is dominated by the destination authorities, such as national tourism organization, travel agents, and tour guides and the tourist themselves.

Perception is the process by which an individual select, organize, and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world (Kotler, 2002). Related to tourism, perception is defined as mental impression of a place or travel company. It is determined by many factors such as childhood, family and world experiences. Cooper adds that there is no two individuals are alike. They will different in attitudes, perceptions, and motivation in the decision process of traveling.

Kotler (2002) also mention that the key word in definition of perception is individual, which means people can emerge with different perception of the same object. Individual perceptions also not only depend on the physical stimuli, but also the stimuli coming from the surrounding environment and the condition of the individual.

3. Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenological approach describes the meaning of the life experiences for several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon. Polkinghorne (1989 cited in Creswell, 1998) explains that phenomenologist explore the structures of consciousness in human experiences. The focus of phenomenological approach is the essential meaning of individual experience, the social construction of the group reality, and the language and structure communication. In addition, Bogdan and Taylor (1975, cited in Bryman, 2001: 14) say that "phenomenologist attempt to see things from that person's point of view".

Husserl (1913) asserts that phenomenology is a study of how people describe things and experience them through their sense. He believes that experiences must be described, explicated, and interpreted. The interpretation is essential in understanding of experience and includes the interpretation itself. Furthermore, the phenomenology makes the experience becomes sense of the world.

According to Stewart and Mickunas (1990 cited in Creswell, 1998), in phenomenology study, the researcher searches for the essential, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experiences. They also emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where the experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image, and meaning.

The process of collecting data in phenomenology study involves in-depth interview with as many as 10 individuals. Polkinghorne (1989) suggests with an in-depth interview lasting as long as 2 hours, 10 subjects represent a reasonable size. The important point is to describe the meaning of a small number of individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) provides a more detail guidelines for collecting data in phenomenology study as shown in Table 2.

For analyzing data in phenomenology Husserl (1913), cited in Creswell, 1998; see Moustakas, 1994) suggests that the data will proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of a specific statement and theme and search for all possible meanings. The researcher sets aside all prejudgments, bracketing, and relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experiences.

Table 2. Data Collection Activities

Data Collection Activities	
Site/individual(s)	Multiple individuals who have experienced the phenomenon
Access and rapport	Finding people who have experiences the phenomenon
Purposeful sampling strategies	Finding individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, a "criterion" sample
Forms of data	Interview with up to 10 people
Recording information	Long interview protocol
Field issues	Bracketing one's experiences, logistic of interviewing
Storing data	Transcriptions, computer files

Adapted from: Creswell (1998: 112-113)

In this research, the three kinds of operations were used: a) noticing relevant phenomena, b) Collecting examples of those phenomena, and c) analyzing those phenomena order to find the commonality, differences, patterns, and structures.

4. Research Method and Framework

In this research, qualitative data is used since the main content of the Word-of-Mouth communication is mostly people's words or phrases. This research will use the framework below which focuses on two aspects: first, the phenomena of the information in the pre-trip and post-trip. The second is the experiences (in the middle box) that expected and will be evaluated by the tourists.

**Figure 2. The Research Frame Work**

Before tourists make a decision (b), they will obtain or receive information from any sources, such as friends, relatives, and brochures (a). Having had the experiences, they might share or tell it to their friends of relatives, who would be the next potential tourists (c).

4.1. Definition of Concepts

a) Attraction is a single unit, individual sites or very small, easily delimited geographical areas based on a single key feature. In this research refers to any attractions that the tourists see or have seen such as temples and heritages in Thailand.

- b) Destination is the place that has a number of attractions along with the support services required by the tourist, such as accommodation, transportation, ancillary service, etc. In this research, the tourist destination chosen by the tourists is Thailand.
- c) Experiences mean every condition, situation that come into the tourists' mind and feeling and come up with expressions, statements, etc.
- d) Post-trip Word-of-Mouth communication means any words or phrases that tourists will say after they have experienced Thailand as their destination and the attractions.
- e) Pre-trip Word-of-Mouth communication refers to any words or phrases that tourists receive before they have any real experiences with Thailand as their destination and the attractions.
- f) Tourist in this research means Indonesian tourist visiting Thailand within December 2003-January 2004.

4.2. Data Sources and Collection

This research used qualitative data from primary sources, which means, that data was consist of any statement, words, or phrases that have been collected first-hand by researcher for this specific research project. The data is collected from 16 Indonesian Tourists who were visiting Thailand from December 2003 until January 2004. These months are considered as Thailand's tourism peak season.

Related to the characteristics of the qualitative research, the qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of qualitative data: a) interviews, b) observations, and c) written documents. However, in this study the data have been collected used combination between in-depth interview and participant observation.

4.3. In-Depth Interview

In-depth interview was used to create the understanding the world as seen by the respondent. It also enable researcher to capture the point of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection questionnaire categories.

In this research, the respondents were approached and asked whether they would like to participate in the research involving the tape recording during the in-depth interview. The interviews were conducted separately used the question list. However, to get deep information, it's also facilitated a free dialog flow which allows other open ended questions to be asked during the interview based on emergent data.

To be able to gain proper answers, this research used a list of questions. The questions in the list has role only as a guidelines for the interviews. It means, the interview process is very open for the other question in order to achieve deeper information about the tourists' experiences.

4.4. Participant Observation

To understand fully the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best

research methods in qualitative research. Becker and Geer (1970) argue that participant observation is the most comprehensive of all types of research strategies.

This activity also used as a selection process of finding the potential interviewees. For this study, the participant observation was conducted by joining the respondents in their trips to Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai on December 29, 2003 to January 3, 2004. The existence and the purpose of the researcher were recognized, and it gave more comfortable relationship with the respondents. Participant observation field notes were used to record the unstated expression or spontaneity expressions or statements of the tourists' when they were in the tourists' attractions.

4.5. Data Analysis

In this research, the three kinds of operations were used: a) noticing relevant phenomena, b) Collecting examples of those phenomena, and c) analyzing those phenomena order to find the commonality, differences, patterns, and structures. Still according to Seidel and Kelle, the used of coding is to reduce data in order to identify of key themes and patterns and creating data segmentation and categories from the raw material.

Differs from coding in quantitative analysis, in qualitative analysis the codes are attached as the way to identify and reordering the data allowing the data to be thought in a new and different way. This process also gives the ability to organize, manage and retrieve the most meaningful of the data. All of this process is done on the paper works, and only the results are presented and discussed in this report.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1. Respondents' Profiles

Demographically, the respondents in this research are Indonesian tourists with different backgrounds; doctors, teachers, students, and government researchers. It terms of gender, there are 8 females and 8 males, aged between 25 and 39 years old. 10 out of 16 respondents are Muslim, and the rest are Christian.

Their likelihood of traveling is different among the respondents. It is related to the number of trips they have done and also the destinations of the trips. Related to the habit of traveling, the respondents also have different habits, it terms of whether they like to travel alone or in group, either related to their professional job or to an individual hobby.

Four of the female respondents (R.1, R.2, R.4, and R.16) are activists in the women's movement in Indonesia, and they said they have opportunities to travel around Indonesia, because sometimes they have to advocate some case in other provinces. So they also have opportunities to see the attractions in those areas. Two women doctors (R.3 and R.7) also have these opportunities, when they have a job to do in other provinces.

In consideration of the number and the destination of the trips, among the 16 respondents, there are three persons whose hobbies are traveling. It can be seen from their statement about the places which they have been visited. The

places which are mentioned by (R.4 and R.7) are located on other island, while they both live in Java Island. At her age of 25 years old, (R.4) has visited two countries abroad, and is willing to visit two other countries such as Malaysia, China, Laos, etc (R.4) a female, single, 25 years old from Yogyakarta. Or R.7, female, 39 years old, a medical doctor from Karawang city, who mention about "Bali, Toba Lake (Sumatra), Banjarmasin and Pontianak (Borneo)"

This study also has revealed that almost all of the respondents have visited Bali, the most famous tourist destination in Indonesia. Their experiences in Bali seem to have created a set idea about the value of natural beauty, which always comes up as a comparison and sticks in their mind during their trips in Thailand.

Since 10 out of 16 respondents are Muslim, it is important to discuss their problems during their trip in Thailand. As with other religions, they also have some specific and strict rules related to their belief. Kotler (2002) has said that culture and sub culture (including the religious) has the deepest influence on the customers' preferences and purchasing decision. Related to tourism, these rules mostly will influence preferences for foods to eat, places to stay or visit or even the way they evaluate the attractions. Because more than 80% of Indonesian people are Muslim, so may be other Indonesian Muslims will have the same problems if they are visiting Thailand.

In the analysis process, to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents' personal identity in this research, the respondents' names are replaced by codes. The code, for example R.1, R.2, R.3, is used. For identification the sources of the statement, I use code "R" for "Respondent" (R.1= Respondent 1) which is applied in all process analysis.

5.2. Common Themes in Pre-Trip (Pre-Trip Information or Statements about Thailand)

Following are the interpretive themes from the Pre-trip Information that the tourists have received about Thailand.

- a) Community Descriptions, as shown in the statements "Thai are very kindness. Their life styles are very cultural oriented" (R.11), or "...in Thailand, few people can speak English" (R.12)
- b) Motivations of seeing the reality of the information that they have received become their ultimate motivation for visiting Thailand such as "... It is a beautiful country (R.6)", "...this information encourages me to see and prove anything that people said..." (R.3).
- c) Specific Places shows that there are only some places in Thailand which are famous and mentioned such Bangkok, Chiang Mai, The Grand Palace, Pattaya, and Patpong. As (R.1, 3, 7, 10, 12 and 14).
- d) Labeling, for Thailand from the Indonesian view is about sexuality. As (R.4) said, "Every time they said about Thailand, for sure, they will also mention Pattaya". A statement: "Thailand has exotic towns" (R.10) shows an assumption about Thailand with many towns which have exotic entertainments, shows, or other features of exoticism.
- e) Warnings, the statements below are implicitly give a warning to someone who wants to visit Thailand. "I have to be careful, because there are many

sexual attractions that might influence me” (R.8). Or (R.13) friends, “I need to be careful when I take an injection. It is because of the existence of AIDS in Thailand”.

- f) Sense of Comparison, about general conditions in Thailand, (R1, R4, R10, R16) similarly said that “...I want to compare my country’s beauty and another country...”.

5.3. Common Themes in Post-Trip (Post-Trip Information or Statements about Thailand)

Asked about the willingness to revisit Thailand in the future if they have a chance, two kinds of answer are defined: definitely “Yes” (10 respondents), definitely “No” (6 respondents).

Firstly, is the discussion about the definitely “Yes” answers. The discussion emphasizes more to reasons why they are willing to revisit Thailand. It is interesting, since they have disappointing or unsatisfactory experiences during their trips. It also will give us more understanding about the possibilities of activities that they will do if they are visiting Thailand in the future.

The common reason for revisiting is not for tourism purpose, but for study, or they will visit only to some places they never visit in Thailand such as: “...Krabi. My friends said the beaches in Krabi are beautiful, it’s still virgin. I want to know, whether it’s more beautiful with Bali or not. For the temples, I think it’s enough”.

Another reason for revisiting Thailand is comes from (R.16). ” May be I will come again to Thailand for business. Thailand has a specific fashion...”. In emotional sense, here are some reasons:

“I like the social life of Thai, they are honest, polite. So I will come again basically not for the trip”. (R.11), “May be I will revisit Thailand. One thing that encourages me is about the society and the facilities, which can make me comfortable during my trip”. (R14) “Of course, I’d like to revisit again. I have a good experience with Thai people, who I’m sure it will become my good memory, I believe one day I want to recall it again, by visiting Thailand”. (R.15)

Secondly, I will discuss about the definitely “No” answer. In general, the reasons for the “No” answer are a result of senses of comparison, which stuck in the tourists’ mind during their trips in Thailand. It also as a reaction towards the attractions in Thailand (mostly are about natural attractions) that they have been visited.

(R.3) said: “I don’t think so. Because the places here, if I compare with the places in Indonesia, Indonesia is more beautiful”. (R.4) said that “I wish I can go to another country. “May be I will visit another country which I haven’t visited. If I have visited Thailand, Why should I come again? I want to know the others”. (R.6)

Secondly is related to the dissatisfaction as a reaction towards the attractions which they have visited. The more extreme expression below seems to represent the feeling of dissatisfaction of the two male respondents’. “I will not come again to Thailand. I’m not interested in Thailand’s attractions. They

do not too good". (R.8). or "Nope, it's enough for me, having a trip in Thailand. I think it's worthless". (R.10)

Answering the question whether they will suggest or recommend Thailand as a tourist destination to their friends or relatives, basically there two answer: "Yes" and "No". Basically this question has an object to know the willingness of suggesting or recommending about making a trip to Thailand.

Considering the number of the answers, six respondents say "No". However, among these six respondents, it's only one respondent who is definitely "No". Which means, the other five respondents with a "No" answer; implicitly still consider suggesting Thailand as a place to be visited. On the other hand, fifteen respondents have answered "Yes". From a thorough reading through the transcripts, there are only eleven respondents who gave a definitely "Yes" answer.

It is shown that every tourist person has a subjective impression about Thailand that they want to share and let their friends or relatives to feel or not to feel the same experiences as they have, even the disappointing experiences. Next, a description about three groups of answer will be discussed. Those are: definitely "Yes", definitely "No", and the third is "Yes, if..." answer, which means they will suggest or recommend under a certain conditions. In the definitely "Yes" answer, there are different reasons for suggesting or recommending visit to Thailand. Using the similarity approach, eight reasons can be reduced into three interpretive themes: (a) Comparison with neighboring countries, (b) Comfortability, and (c) Specific purposes.

6. Conclusion

The summary of the findings is grouped based on the subject of the information or statement that is Thailand as a tourist destination and Thailand's attractions. Husserl (1913) asserts that phenomenology is a study of how people describe things and experience them through their sense. The interpretation is essential in understanding of experience and includes the interpretation itself. Furthermore, the phenomenology makes the experience becomes sense of the world. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is the first study of this type in Indonesia, which would be useful as a guideline for more in-depth studies in this field.

6.1. Summary of Findings

6.1.1. Pre-Trip

In Pre-trip information, respondents received six themes of information from their friends and relatives. The six themes will be presented in synthesis rather than in order.

- a) The most general is the description about the community (Thailand people). This information is very limited since only two persons mention about this information. That means, the tourists (respondent) come to Thailand like a "blank paper" ready to fill during their trips. It also mentions about the conditions in Thailand, which should not be a cause for worry because of some similarity it terms of culture and foods.

- b) They also received the other side of Thai society which is related to the image of sexuality in Thailand and also warning statements relating to the existence of a free sexual market and the AIDS disease. This information makes at least two respondents worried since they have different perspectives based on culture.
- c) The other information is about the description about some places which have been described as beautiful places. This information gives the respondent a certain motivation to visit Thailand. However, as the reaction of the description about those places, shows when comparison are made, all of the respondents prefer the attractions in Indonesia.

6.1.2. Post-Trip

The post-trip information or statements comprises three parts: willingness to revisit Thailand, telling points, and willingness to recommend and suggest for visiting Thailand to the respondents' friends and relatives.

- a) It terms of number, ten out of sixteen respondents willing to revisit Thailand. However, there is a paradigm shift in the purpose of visiting Thailand. From the analysis, it shows that may be the attractions in Thailand are no longer attractive to visit rather than the society which is more attractive to be experienced.
- b) The implementation of the post trip Word-of-Mouth Communication is in the telling point part. Generally, the respondent will talk about everything related to their experiences in Thailand, not only the positive side, but also the negative side.
- c) The positive side means it terms of the comfortability related to the general facilities and services and the good behavior of Thai. There was a certain admiration which is followed by statement of hope towards Indonesia Government to manage its potential tourism in the way Thailand has done.
- d) The negative side of the information comprises two things: the sexual image of Thailand that would be more believable among the new respondents' friend and relatives and the dissatisfactions or disappointment with the attractions in Thailand.

6.2. Recommendation

Here are two types of recommendation: The first is for the Thai government, especially the institution which promotes the attractions in Thailand (TAT). This institution should consider the so-called "bombastic advertisements", since some disappointments with the reality of these advertisements has been discovered in sixteen respondents. It means, in creating the advertisements, it is important to consider what Berry and Parasuraman (1991) have said to "ensure promises reflect the reality" to avoid the over promising in the advertisement.

The second is for future research. It may be also important to discover the Word-of-Mouth communication among other nationalities, since Thailand is known as tourist destination with visitors coming from many nationalities. The problem of disappointment would be also appeared for other international tourists. Despite the limitations, it is hoped that this thesis will shed some light

onto the understanding of tourist experiences and that it will spur a larger research project in this area so that a closer connection may be established between academia and the practitioners of the tourism industry.

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